

INTELLIFAX 21

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Subject: Comments on Difficulties Encountered in Surveying Route of Kindu - Boshishombe Highway

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1. "Thanks for your letter of 16 Apr. I'm glad you made it, to be home for Easter; hope you had a good time with your family telling them about this wild country, with its wild people and big animals.
2. "I'm finding out that there is a much easier way to hunt elephants between Kindu and the Lomami. There are lots of elephants down there in those orchards and you can get them out in the open, so they are much easier to shoot. We found thousands of fresh tracks on our last reconnaissance party and they came all out in the open savannah. But that's for later.
3. "Now about that reconnaissance, it is worse than anything I've ever done. After you left I drove back to Kindu and organized a quick over-all reconnaissance, pushing North and South and East-West through the country. So by now I have a fair idea about that whole country and I could make up my first report. I'm writing to you officially about that next week. To come back on our cross country news; first day I started at 5 o'clock in the morning, came back 1:30 at night! Next day started at 6, but did not come back at all; sat shivering, soaking wet all the night in a car that I could not move. Next day I was going to be in at a reasonable hour but a truck (not ours) went down in the Kasuhu with ferry and all. So again I spent the whole night in the car.
4. "When I finally drove back to Luluabourg, I broke down in the woods between Kahuti and Katako-Kombe. (again diaphragm, gas pump and obstructed line, you know that story). And there were elephants!

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- 2 -

All night they were around the car. They scared the heck out of my driver and I had to do all the repairing myself. Elephants were really near but it was so dark that I did not dare to risk a shot (self defense!)

5. "Now to give you an idea what we went through on that reconnaissance. Samangua was bad, but this was twice as worse: on our first march we followed the straight line Bolaiti-Kindu. There were extremely heavy rains the last days, so all the savannah was flooded. We kept on pushing through for about 20 Kms. hoping always to find a good trial to come back to the main road. But it was all the same marshy, flooded country. It took us till 1:10 past midnight to make the road again. And we had to - there was not one place to camp.
6. "We literally had to crawl through. Not one place where you could put your foot. We were so happy when from time to time we could follow an elephant track in our direction. And you know what that means. Water up to the chest and sometimes more but at least you could put down two feet. That day we made around 32 Kms - and so for 6 days. There is only one way for our hydrographers to get through: a tippoy. Let them be carried through. It's easy to do from transit station to transit station. It's what I advised to organize. And seeing their reports they are doing well this way.
7. "A trouble also are Tse-Tse's. This time I got really bitten and plenty of times. Always in the same place; in the slits of my rolled down sleeves. You feel it only when they are thick with blood. However, I'm not too much worried because we were so far from any inhabited place that chances for infected Twe-Tse's are probably low. It's always the same story, you get so exhausted by this crawling through that at the end you do not care for what stings or bites you.
8. "Well the worst part is over now. Survey is proceeding well (2nd phase) and 1st phase Bolaiti-Katako has been started. VanKeerbergen went through in a straight line only with a crew of natives with Jean as capita! It's 110 miles unknown, wild country, no villages and no roads. I gave him 2 weeks - he made it in 10 days. He is really doing well. Is already back on Bol-Kindu working on 2nd phase. He's got a lot of useful information and it will help us a lot when I go down next week again to make a through reconnaissance of that part."

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